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# THE CONDOR

An Illustrated Magazine  
of Western Ornithology

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J. GRINNELL, Editor, Berkeley, Calif.

J. EUGENE LAW  
W. LEE CHAMBERS } Business Managers

HARRY S. SWARTH  
ROBERT B. ROCKWELL } Associate Editors  
G. WILLET

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

During the past summer the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology has had two expeditions in the field, both in the state of California. This in addition to the party which, earlier in the season (March 6 to June 6) traversed the length of the San Joaquin Valley. Some of the ornithological results obtained by the latter (primarily a mammal collecting expedition) are published in the present, and in the last number of THE CONDOR.

Miss Annie M. Alexander and Miss Louise Kellogg, with assistants, spent three months in the high mountains of Siskiyou County, collecting birds and mammals, in continuance of work begun by them in Trinity County, during January and February. The series of specimens gathered includes some species new to the Museum collections, and others but scantily represented; while one species of bird was secured new to the state of California.

The special point of enquiry toward which the work has been directed is to ascertain the relationships of the fauna of the region with that of Mount Shasta on the one hand, and the Humboldt Bay region on the other. At the latter point the Museum had collectors working during the previous summer (1910); the Mount Shasta fauna has been the subject of exhaustive study by Dr. C. Hart Merriam.

J. Grinnell and W. P. Taylor, with T. I. Stor-er, H. A. Carr, and N. Stern as assistants, have been exploring the mountains between Bakers-

field and Mount Whitney since the middle of June. In two parties they traveled up different branches of the Kern River, finally meeting in the high mountains, and are to come out by way of Owen's Valley, on the eastern side of the range. The expedition has been highly successful in every way. At the last report received there were but two species of mammals known to occur in the region which had not been secured, and the bird collection is almost as comprehensive, at least as regards summer residents. The results will be of peculiar interest, both in relation to the collections already amassed from the southern California mountain ranges, and to those from the San Joaquin Valley.

California ornithologists will rejoice at the news that Mr. F. S. Daggett has returned to this state, and that there is a possibility of his making his home here once more. The Cooper Club will profit greatly by the renewal of his active participation in the affairs of the organization.

Dr. N. Dearborn, of the Biological Survey, has been spending part of the summer in California, in pursuance of the work of that Bureau, visiting the forest reserves of Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Bernardino counties. His particular study is the determination of the extent to which the smaller rodents are detrimental to the planting operations of the Forestry Department, and devising ways of reducing their numbers where necessary.

Mr. Malcolm P. Anderson, who for some years past has been collecting birds and mammals in Asia for the British Museum, has recently returned to his home at Menlo Park, California. His work took him to the more remote islands of the Japanese archipelago, and also to the wilder parts of western China, and to Tibet.

## PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

A REVISION OF THE FORMS OF THE HAIRY WOODPECKER (*Dryobates villosus* [Linnaeus]). By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER. [=Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., vol. 40, 1911, pp. 595-621, pl. 70 (map). Published June 3, 1911.] As a result of the careful examination of a very large series of these woodpeckers (1070 specimens) Mr. Oberholser increases the fourteen forms heretofore recognized, to twenty, three of the newly described subspecies occurring north of Mexico, in the territory covered by the A. O. U. Check List. Of the remaining three, two are from Mexico and one from Nicaragua.

*Dryobates v. hyloscopus* suffers the most in this readjustment, as it supplies the material for all three of the new North American forms—*D. v. orius*, type from Quincy, California, occurring in eastern Washington and Oregon, south to central California, *D. v. leucothoractis*, in central New Mexico, northern Arizona, and southern Utah, and *D. v. icastus*, a Mexican form ranging north to extreme southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. The

unfortunate *hyloscopus*, thus dismembered, is finally restricted to a slender thread of territory winding over parts of southern California and along the coast, except in the extreme northwestern corner of the state; and the threat implied in the statement that the type of the subspecies, from San Jose, California, is not really typical of any form, leads us to fear that it may even be cast out from this, its last refuge!

The name of the big Northern Hairy Woodpecker is changed to *Dryobates villosus septentrionalis* (Nuttall) on grounds which may or may not be considered adequate. The range of *D. v. picoides* is given as including Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, a view with which the present reviewer does not agree at all, for reasons already detailed elsewhere. Also the statements that *harrisi* is remarkably uniform in size and color, over its entire range, and that there is very little individual variation in the form, are not borne out by an Alaskan series at hand, evidently more extensive than the material from that region at the disposal of Mr. Oberholser.

However, these are matters of detail, and largely of opinion, but whether or not one feels inclined to give names to all of the rather slightly differentiated varieties here recognized, there is no question at all as to the value and excellence of Mr. Oberholser's work. Careful discrimination is required in the handling of a difficult group like the one under discussion, and we have in the present paper an accurate resumé of the problem. The descriptions and critical comments are such as will always be returned to by future workers, the key to the subspecies, contained in the introduction, is excellently devised (if all the individuals of a subspecies would only be "typical"! ), and the map outlining the breeding ranges is a decidedly valuable feature of the paper.—H. S. S.

A REVISION OF THE FORMS OF THE LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Dryobates scalaris* [Wagler]). By HARRY C. OBERHOLSER. [=Proc. U. S. National Museum, Vol. 41, pp. 139-159, pl. 12 (map); published June 30, 1911.] As one of the results of Mr. Oberholser's study of this group "the six currently recognized races are here increased to fifteen." In place of *Dryobates s. bairdi*, heretofore considered to be the form ranging along the southern border of the United States, from Texas to southern California, we have here two races described, *D. s. symplectus*, the Texas Woodpecker, and *D. s. cactophilus* (type locality Tucson, Arizona), the form occurring in northern Mexico, western Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California. *Bairdi* is restricted to a comparatively limited area in central Mexico. Neither of the two subspecies regarded as inhabiting Lower California (*D. s. eremicus* in the north-

ern, and *D. s. lucasanus* in the southern half of the peninsula) is considered to occur in southern California, specimens from the Colorado Desert formerly identified as *D. s. lucasanus*, being now regarded as variants of *cactophilus* showing intergradation with *D. s. eremicus*.—H. S. S.

DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPOTTED TOWHEE FROM THE GREAT BASIN. By J. GRINNELL. [=Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 7, August 24, 1911, pp. 309-311.] The Towhee of northern Nevada, northeastern California and southern Oregon is here separated as a distinct form, under the name of *Pipilo maculatus curtatus*, type locality Pine Forest Mountains, Nevada. From *P. m. montanus* of Arizona and New Mexico it is distinguished by shorter wing and tail, and darker coloration; from *P. m. megalonyx* by somewhat paler coloration, greater extent of white markings, and much shorter hind-toe-and-claw. It is a migratory form, the summer range about as given above, while winter specimens were secured on the lower Colorado River.—H. S. S.

A NEW BLUE GROSBEAK FROM CALIFORNIA. By J. GRINNELL. [=Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash., vol. xxiv, June 16, 1911, p. 163.] The California Blue Grosbeak, here named *Guiraca caerulea salicarius*, (type locality Colton, San Bernardino County), is separated from *G. c. lazula* mainly on the smaller size and different proportions of the bill. The two forms are indistinguishable in color both differing from *G. c. caerulea* of the South Atlantic States in the paler blue coloration of the male bird.—H. S. S.

EARLY SUMMER BIRDS IN YOSEMITE VALLEY. By J. GRINNELL. [=Sierra Club Bulletin, vol. 8, June, 1911, pp. 118-124.] A sketch of the birds observed in the valley during a ten days visit (May 22 to June 1, 1911). The species met with during this time, fifty-five in number, are listed at the end of the article; while of the more interesting or conspicuous ones, portions of life history or particulars of the manner of occurrence, are detailed in the body of the paper. The best find was a nest of the Calaveras Warbler; another, nearly as good, one of the Winter Wren.

The number of species noted seems to justify the conclusion that "in abundance and variety of its bird life Yosemite is at the very least as well provided for as any other part of the West of similar climatic and floral qualifications"; though the magnificent scenic attractions are so engrossing as to assist at first to a different impression.

The paper closes with a list of the five titles previously published relative to the birds of Yosemite Valley.—H. S. S.